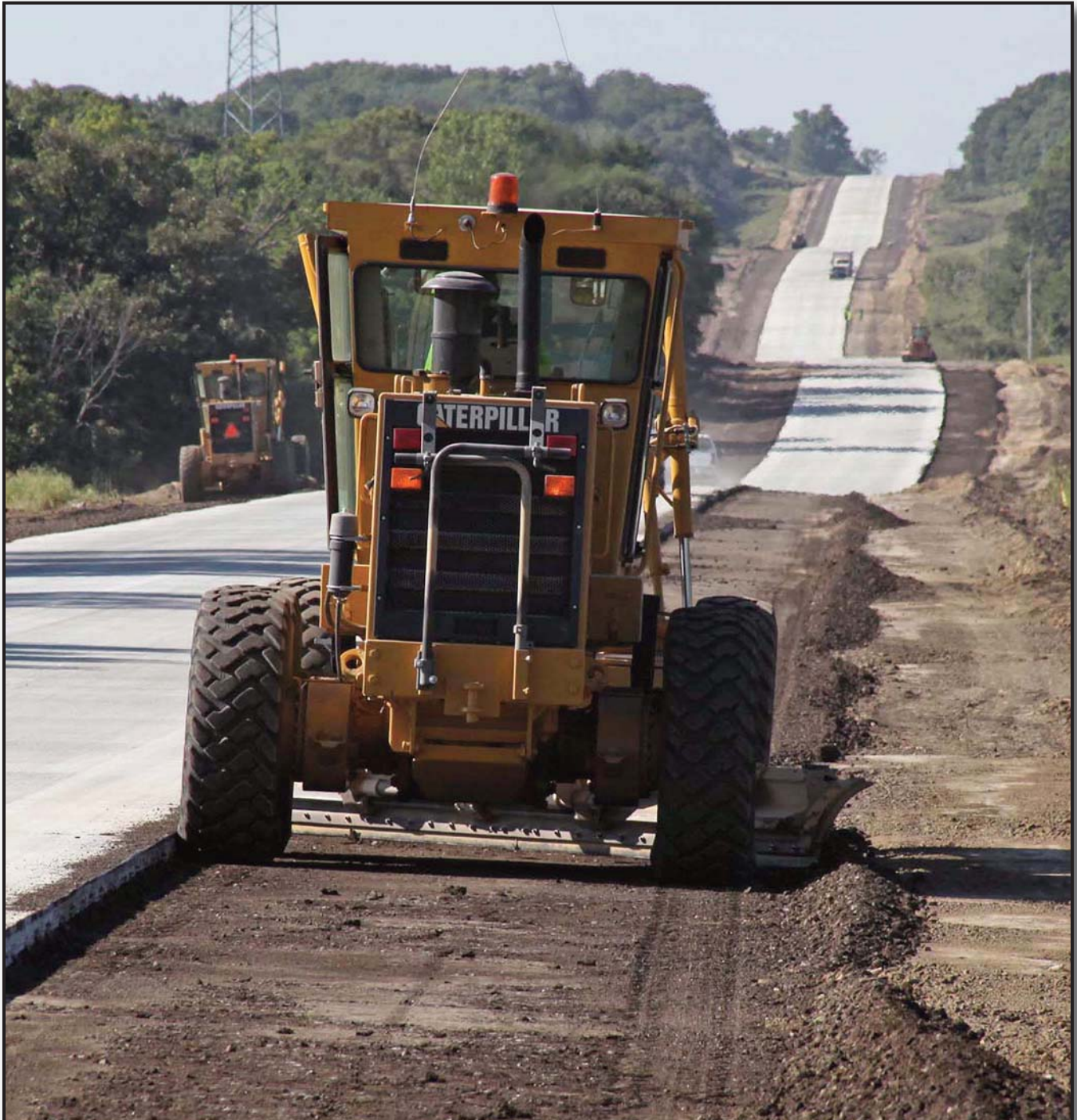


# the ROADRUNNER

Nebraska ♦ Department ♦ of ♦ Roads

August/September 2014



## *Caterpillar Races*

Construction workers complete grading of shoulders on US-75 south of Union.

*Photo by Jay Bailey*

# the Roadrunner

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## Governor Dave Heineman

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The information in this newsletter is contributed  
by employees, retirees and friends of NDOR.



# Surface Transportation Program Announced for Fiscal Year 2015

The Nebraska Department of Roads' Director, Randy Peters, released the Fiscal Year 2015 Surface Transportation Program. This publication details how the department plans to use the taxpayers' highway user dollars to provide the best state highway system possible for all Nebraskans and the traveling public.

The 2015 State Highway System Program is published at \$457 million and is funded from state and federal highway user taxes and fees. The Local System Program for city streets and county roads totals \$303 million and is funded with state, federal and local highway user revenues.

A total of 153 projects will be let to contract on the State Highway System during fiscal year 2015 (July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015). Projects throughout the state will range in size and scope from small intersection improvements involving lighting and traffic signals to pavement and bridge preservation projects to large resurfacing and reconstruction projects.

Some of the larger projects include 7 miles of asphalt resurfacing and the replacement of five bridges east and west of Hendley in Furnas County; 8.8 miles of roadway widening, asphalt resurfacing and bridge repair on US-183 in Brown County; and 11.5 miles of roadway widening, asphalt resurfacing and bridge repair east of Newcastle on N-12 in Cedar and Dixon Counties. In Johnson County, 11.3 miles of N-41 will be widened and resurfaced with asphalt east of Sterling; in North Platte, US-83 (Jeffers St.) will be reconstructed between 1st St. and 6th St., including removal and rebuilding of the storm sewer system that was originally constructed in the 1920s.

Funds from The Build Nebraska Act will be put to use in completing the reconstruction of N-133 between Omaha and Blair with the Blair South project and constructing the third and final phase of the Kearney East Bypass project. Major projects on Interstate 80 include replacing 7.5 miles of concrete pavement west of Sidney and replacing 11.5 miles between Big Springs and Brule.

The 2015-2020 Nebraska Surface Transportation Program is now available at [www.transportation.nebraska.gov/hwy-pgm](http://www.transportation.nebraska.gov/hwy-pgm). ♦





# Transit Managers Gather for Workshop in North Platte

**By Kari Ruse**  
Rail & Public Transportation Division

The annual Transit Managers' Workshop was held July 8-11 in North Platte. Attendees included over 30 rural public transit managers from across the state, the NDOR Transit Section, staff from the University of Nebraska (NU) and representatives from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region 7 office.

The event was hosted by the Nebraska Association of Transit Providers. Transit managers received updates from NDOR and NU about ongoing transit projects. Staff from NU demonstrated a new, customized online invoicing system for rural transit providers submitting operating expense invoices to NDOR for reimbursement. NDOR unveiled a best practices maintenance manual for public transit vehicles.

The FTA updated managers about the insolvency of the highway trust fund and possible implications for state and local transit systems. The FTA also recognized transit managers for a number of accomplishments including increasing ridership from the previous fiscal year and completing construction of transit storage facilities.

During the workshop attendees were invited to tour the new transit vehicle storage facility in North Platte. The 11,000-square-foot building was funded through the 2009 American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) and includes storage for eleven vehicles, a wash bay, offices for transit staff and a conference room. ♦



*Photo by Logan Daniels*

**Carol Prince (left), manager of Scottsbluff County Public Transit, receives a plaque from FTA Regional Administrator, Mokhtee Ahmad, in recognition of the completion of the new bus storage facility in Gering.**



*Photo by Marilee Hyde*

**The North Platte Public Transit Facility was completed in 2012. The entire project was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), provided for public transportation projects by the U.S. Department of Transportation.**

# ROW Property Management Section Focuses on Public Interest

Those who have built roads in Nebraska are aware of the importance of the Property Management Section in NDOR's Right-of-Way Division. The buck stops here, literally, as a project can't be let to build a road without approval from this section.

Approval comes in the form of Right-of-Way Certificates which verify that all property rights have been acquired, the encroachments are cleared, NDOR has complied with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, and that the project is ready for construction.

"These certificates are very important; if we don't issue them, they can't let a project to build the roads," noted Todd Wicken, Property Management Supervisor.

One of the five employees in Wickens' section, Daryl Behrends, Highway Right-of-Way Agent II, works to ensure that all easements, railroads, landowners and lessees are paid prior to issuance of the certificates.

## Major Responsibilities

In addition to this key function, a myriad of other responsibilities are performed by this section, which manages and administers property acquired for highway purposes so that the public interest is served. Some of the tasks related to managing the newly acquired right-of-way include maintaining an inventory of property; entering into short-term rental agreements for landowners and tenants to continue in occupancy until the property is needed; selling buildings to be moved; demolitions of property; clearing and grubbing.

Another responsibility includes selling excess land. Wicken noted, "On average we've got at least 60 excess land sales going on at one time. The approval process averages three to six months, but there are some that require a year or longer to complete." The Property Management Section also sells surplus maintenance yards



Photo by Jay Bailey

Members of Right-of-Way's Property Management Section include, *seated, l to r:* Roxanne Sullivan, Melissa Krouse. *Standing:* Daryl Behrends, Todd Wicken, Tom Manning, Jill Smith.

that are no longer needed by the department. Melissa Krouse, Right-of-Way Agent II, has the primary responsibility for these sales. She also assists with the permit process and Local Public Agency (LPA) oversight.

The section also manages airspace, or leases, for non-highway purposes on all highway systems. This is the space located above, at or below the highways established grade line lying within the right-of-way. Behrends works with leasing this state property and he is also involved with selling surplus properties, land and improvements by holding auctions or sealed-bid sales.

## Corridor Protection

In addition, this section manages the corridor protection system, which allows NDOR to make advance acquisitions of property located within an approved highway corridor. In doing so, the department can delay development of the property until they have had time to purchase the land. "Through corridor protection, the public is informed in advance, preventing costly and conflicting development of the land involved," Wicken noted.

Yet another area of responsibility involves relinquishment and abandonment of old highways and segments of highways remaining after the construction of the relocated roadway is completed. Wicken cited an example of the re-routing of US-81 around Geneva and the relinquishment of the old Highway 81 to the city and the county.

He emphasized that this doesn't mean they have ownership, adding, "They just get the right to maintain the road, while we still own the access control rights, signage and right-of-way. If the relinquishment offer is declined, abandonment instruments are prepared which indicate if the property is to be sold, revert to private ownership or remain in public ownership. When we abandon a piece of roadway, generally it's just abandoned to be sold, in accordance with State Statutes that say we must receive fair market value."

As far as oil and gas leases, according to Wicken, NDOR doesn't buy oil rights underneath highways anymore, but if they already own them, they can lease them. The party that is leasing can't go on the right-of-

(see **Property** on next page)



## **Property** *(cont'd. from page 4)*

way, but they can horizontally bore underneath. They are required to pay royalties for any oil or gas they extract. According to Wicken, with the recent increase in oil prices, the number of leases has gone up. "We've done six of these leases in the last month and a half, which is more than we've done in a long time. They are usually in the western part of the state or in the far southeastern corner. Last year we made almost \$17,000 in oil and gas leases."

Another activity of this section involves payments for crop damage and temporary fencing, which occurs when crops or fencing are removed for a roads project. According to Wicken, this is usually part of the contract for the project and is a fairly rare occurrence.

### **Occupancy Permits**

Another major responsibility of this section is preparing occupancy permits, permanent encroachment permits, and commercial/private driveway permits. Occupancy permits include anything that involves the right-of-way throughout the entire state. This could include water lines, gas lines, sewer lines, intersection improvements, grading and landscaping. Jill Smith is responsible for issuing these permits and estimates that 1,200 permits are issued a year.

According to Smith, the permits are reviewed in each of the eight districts and they determine the amount of the performance guarantee. Once the permitted work is completed to the district's satisfaction, the district will then release or cancel the permit. It is at this point that she refunds the performance guarantee to the permittee. If the work was not completed correctly and damage was done to the right-of-way, the district can request that the performance guarantee be withheld.

In addition to permitting, Smith also manages controlled access, which is a federally-controlled part of the state highway system. She explained, "If someone wants to have access in that area, they can apply and members of the access management team, which includes division heads, meets to review it to see if it's allowable, with a majority vote required for approval. If it is approved, the customer is charged for access rights. For example, if a business wants to build a store along a

highway in a small Nebraska town, we would take it to the committee and discuss safety and any other concerns; if the access is approved we will then have the property appraised and charge for controlled access. In 2012, we sold \$63,000 worth of access control."

Money generated from all Property Management activities listed above totaled \$620,000 for 2012. This money goes back into the Highway Trust Fund for use on other projects.

### **Oversight of Local Projects**

Another crucial but complex aspect of the Right-of-Way Property Management Section involves monitoring Local Public Agency right-of-way functions when federal aid is used. Roxanne Sullivan, LPA Right-of-Way Coordinator, and Tom Manning, Highway Right-of-Way Agent II, provide oversight of all local projects, ensuring that all projects involving federal funds follow the Uniform Act.

Sullivan noted, "Even if there are no federal dollars being requested for right-of-way activities, not following the Uniform Act could jeopardize federal funding for other phases including construction. Our division reviews all documents, working closely with the LPA and their right-of-way consultant, as well as with our Federal Highway Administration Realty Specialist, Justin Luther, to try to get everything in order so that the project can move forward."

Sullivan continued, "The staff in Local Projects oversee all of the federal aid local projects, and then as a part of that, we review all of the local agencies' right-of-way process. After they have completed working with Roadway Design, Environmental and others and get to the point where they have to acquire right-of-way, that's when Tom and I get involved to oversee the right-of-way process of those local projects."

Manning offered a quick overview of the process: "As soon as we are notified that there's a local project that's active, the right-of-way plans are prepared, reviewed and approved by our Right-of-Way Design Engineer, then submitted for a cost estimate. This goes to our Chief Appraiser who reviews and approves. Then the LPAs get notice to proceed with their appraisals. First they obligate federal funds

according to how much is in the right-of-way cost estimate. Next, local agencies go out and appraise and these appraisals come back to our office. The Chief Appraiser and his staff review and provide oversight to make sure everything was appraised according to federal and state rules and regulations. Once those are done, they get a notice to proceed with actual acquisitions for right-of-way, which can take from two months to two or three years. When they're completely done, the paperwork comes back to us and we review all the required documents to ensure compliance, that they've been recorded in the courthouse correctly, have been notarized and that the owner and everyone else has been paid. When the entire process has been completed, Roxanne generates the Right-of-Way Certificate. If they don't get a certificate, then they don't get to do the project."

Sullivan noted that the two oversee projects involving cities and counties across the state, including secondary and urban projects, all trails projects, and Safe Routes to School. "We have over 100 active projects right now so we're busy all the time."

### **Moving Projects Forward**

Sullivan summarized the LPA Right-of-Way activities: "Tom and I see our role as moving the projects forward, but at the same time, looking out for the benefits of the property owners."

Manning added, "We also want to make sure the Local Agencies get the funds that they need; that's why we're involved step-by-step to make sure they qualify for these federal funds."

This focus on the twin goals of public interest and the maximum public benefit remains the common thread in all of the responsibilities and functions of the Property Management Section.

Wicken noted, "We're a microcosm of the entire Right-of-Way Division. At times we deal with just about everything but the kitchen sink, and we all work together to accomplish the same goals, while adhering to NDOR's mission statement and strategic goals, particularly those most relevant to our section: project development; asset management; fiscal responsibility; communication, coordination, collaboration and cooperation." ♦

# Boston Marathon Runner, Hero Awarded Soldier's Medal

*Editor's Note: The following article recaps the heroic efforts of Col. Everett Spain, during and after his duties as guide runner for Steve Sabra, Structural Engineer in NDOR's Bridge Division, who participated in the 2013 Boston Marathon.*

**By Bernard Tate**  
Army News Service

Many Americans have seen the shaky photos and videos taken when the bombs exploded at the finish line of the Boston Marathon on April 15, 2013. Among the many people who went to the aid of the injured, there are glimpses of runners who stripped off their shirts to tie tourniquets around the shattered limbs of bomb victims.

One of those unknown runners was Col. Everett Spain, an Army engineer who is earning a doctorate in management at the Harvard Business School. On April 18, 2014, in a ceremony on the school's Baker Lawn, Spain received the Soldier's Medal, the Army's highest award for valor in a non-combat situation.

## Character & Leadership

But Spain has shunned any publicity, avoided interviews with the civilian news media.

"First and foremost, I was brought up to believe that military officers should never seek praise for themselves," Spain said. "Our purpose is to serve others through character and leadership."

Despite Spain's modesty, his actions are a matter of public record in images taken during the Boston Marathon attack. He was only about 100 yards from the finish line when the bombs exploded.



Col. Everett Spain, left, served as Steve Sabra's guide runner during the 2013 Boston Marathon. Sabra is a Structural Engineer in NDOR's Bridge Division. They were in the last 10K leg of the Marathon, "giving fives" to spectators. Col. Spain is wearing the t-shirt he tore into strips to make tourniquets to help injured victims of the bombings.

He was escorting Steve Sabra, a 58-year old visually impaired runner who frequently selects Harvard Business School students to be his race guides. Spain's wife, Julia, escorted Sabra on the first 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) of the race. Tom Hennessey and Scott McBride, both Harvard Business School students and Navy veterans, also escorted Sabra. Hennessey ran from the 10K to the 20K mile markers, and McBride from the 10K to the 30K, where Spain took over to escort Sabra to the finish line. McBride decided to tag along to the end.

The trio was 100 yards from the finish line when the first bomb detonated about 50 yards ahead. Moments later, the second bomb detonated about 210 yards behind the first.

## Positive Control

Spain is a 22-year Army veteran with combat experience. In Iraq he received the Purple Heart while with the 1st Cavalry Division, and later served as the aide-de-camp of Gen. David Petraeus, commander of the Multi-National Force-Iraq, during "The Surge." He is also a graduate of the elite U.S. Army Ranger School.

So the moment the bombs exploded, Spain instinctively grabbed Sabra's elbow and sprinted to the finish line. McBride escorted Sabra to his family waiting in the reunion area while Spain ran back to the site of the first explosion.

"It's what Soldiers do," Spain said. "Scott had positive control of Steve and was taking him toward safety, so it was

my responsibility to run to the critical point and see if I could help. I've served with thousands of brave and selfless service members and civilians throughout my time in the Army, and they all had high expectations of me and each other to always try to do the right thing."

He found several severely wounded people on the sidewalk, including a man bleeding profusely from his lower left leg while his daughter, distraught and wounded herself, frantically tried to stop her father's bleeding. Spain immediately

(see **Marathon** on next page)



## Marathon (cont'd. from page 6)

removed his shirt and tied it tightly around the man's wound.

### Calm, Self-Assured

"My husband, Ron, had lost a large portion of his leg," said Karen Brassard, recounting the moment. "I had a sweater and tried to make a tourniquet, but it just didn't work. My daughter panicked; she thought she was going to lose her dad. Then Everett came and tied another tourniquet and got my daughter to calm down enough to let Ron go so that they could take him to a tent. Everett had been in battle and had seen stuff like this. He was so self-assured, so calm that my daughter trusted him. It was amazing to watch."

Spain then moved to a woman lying in a pool of blood in the doorway of an athletic store while another responder tried unsuccessfully to put pressure on the wound. Spain secured a jacket from the store, tied its arms into a tourniquet just above the woman's leg wound, and used a sturdy clothes hanger to tighten the tourniquet. He and the other responder then held the woman's legs in the air until emergency medical technicians arrived several minutes later.

Spain heard the athletic store's fire alarms and searched for possible victims trapped inside that store and two neighboring buildings. When he exited the third building, uniformed responders asked him if he was all right, then ordered him to depart the area.

Spain was smeared with blood (not his own), and a concerned bystander escorted him to the race's medical tent. There Spain saw a woman with multiple serious limb injuries and severe burns wheeled in on a gurney and left alone. She was shaking and turning pale, which Spain recognized as symptoms of shock, so he got another blanket and then stayed with her, talking to her and comforting her. Several minutes later, Spain accompanied her in an ambulance to Boston Medical Center, holding her hand and reassuring her the entire way.

Thinking back on that day, Spain says that he doesn't remember being scared because his training kicked in automatically.

"I remember a lot of that day vividly, but some things I simply do not remember, for example treating one of the victims who was captured in photographs."

### Highest Award

Spain and his family have kept in touch with the people he aided and their families. Six survivor families, including all of those that Spain met that day, attended the ceremony where he received the Soldier's Medal. The Soldier's Medal is the Army's highest award for valor in a non-combat situation involving personal danger and voluntary risk of life. The award requires the same level of valor as the Distinguished Service Cross, had the situation involved combat.

Spain says it is difficult to explain why he reacted as he did that day.

"I can say with perfect honesty that it was not me who ran toward the smoke, but the values deliberately imprinted on me by my faith, my family, my friends, my mentors, the many character-building institutions I've been privileged to be associated with, and our American spirit," Spain said in his speech during the ceremony. "Those values ran toward that smoke."

Read more here: [www.army.mil/article/124781/Boston\\_Marathon\\_hero\\_awarded\\_Soldier\\_s\\_Medal/](http://www.army.mil/article/124781/Boston_Marathon_hero_awarded_Soldier_s_Medal/) ♦



**Back row:** Col. Everett Spain, second from left, pictured with Steve Sabra, Structural Engineer in NDOR's Bridge Division. **Front row, l to r:** Col. Spain's son; Sabra's wife, Pat, and his son, Danny. Photo was taken after the Soldier's Medal Ceremony held on April 18, 2014, at the Harvard University campus in Boston.

Photos by: Sharon Thomsen

# NDOR's Randy ElDorado Takes on Challenge of "Bike MS"

Randy ElDorado had his first encounter with the effects of multiple sclerosis (MS), or as Randy calls it, "Mister Swanson," back in 1988. He had just finished playing a full-court basketball game with fellow NDOR Roadway Division employees on a cold, wintry Friday night when it happened.

"Toward the end of the evening, my vision would be affected... I wouldn't say it was blurry; I would call it a loss of pixel quality – similar to what happens with a computer screen – my vision would de-pixelize. Optics-wise I was fine, but the nervous system that carries the information to be processed was compromised. I didn't understand it then, but I later learned this is one of the first symptoms of MS."

It wasn't until October 2005 when Randy was actually diagnosed with the disease. In addition to changes in his vision, additional symptoms had developed and worsened, including balance issues and increased fatigue. At this point, there was no turning back as he faced the battle of his life.

## Mister Swanson

"We started calling my disease 'Mister Swanson'; he's my uninvited guest that will never leave. Sometimes he's a bugger and sometimes he's not such a big problem, but he can be. What's most affected is my ability to move – that's the simplest definition of MS – and staying active is the bottom line; the key is staying mobile."

Randy had already been active, an avid cyclist since his early boyhood days doing a paper route in his hometown of Wausa, Nebraska, then continuing cycling through college and beyond, while commuting back and forth to his job at NDOR, through 2004. At this point, "Mister Swanson" cropped up again, creating a new hurdle, a new challenge.

"The thing about MS is that the major muscles, the 'grunt' muscles,



Photo by Janet ElDorado

**Randy ElDorado, Consultant Services Engineer in NDOR's Planning and Project Development Division, takes a break at Lincoln's Antelope Park during a ride on his TerraTrike.**

like your thigh muscles, still work fairly well. It's the fine motor skills muscles, the 'smart' muscles, those we use for balance and for walking, that are most affected. Biking was more difficult to do on two wheels; balance issues came into play. That's why the thought of riding a trike appealed to me. I can ride it without worrying about balance."

Since Randy's wife, Janet, her sister and his brother-in-law had taken up cycling, they wanted to find a way for him to join them, but had difficulty locating a recumbent trike that was affordable. His niece, a former grant-writer for a college in northwest Iowa, found some grant sources, including the Challenged Athletes' Foundation, <http://www.challengedathletes.org>.

## Grant and Goals

It took almost 10 hours for him to complete the paperwork, but the results were worth it. Not long after he mailed the application, Randy

was awarded a grant towards the purchase of the trike.

"The grant was wonderful, and helped towards the purchase of a 'TerraTrike.' It's built for speed, has lighter-weight parts and a bigger drive wheel on the back. That way I can get a little more speed, which is what I like."

Randy has wasted no time setting some ambitious goals for the use of his trike. It will require grit and determination, but he plans to stick with those goals by staying active and moving forward to help push back the disease.

"Right after I got this trike I was up to doing a mile before I had to stop. Now I'm going to go for a three-mile ride and hope to reach that goal within the next month. My short-term goal is to be able to commute to work on this trike, which is three miles one way. It's all on a trail with a relatively flat profile, except for one hill just east of

(see **MS Challenge** on next page)



## MS Challenge (cont'd. from page 8)

27th Street. The trails system in Lincoln is phenomenal, plus they're flat railroad-style profiles, and that's important, as I'm not a hill climber...yet. I hope to commute to work by this fall when the weather is cooler."

### Bike MS

A major goal on the horizon is to use his trike to participate in an MS fundraiser, "Bike MS," sponsored by the National MS Society, Mid America Chapter. This annual event will be held this year on September 6th and 7th in Bellevue, Nebraska.

"Hopefully, my participation will motivate a lot of people to be on my team of cyclists, which is 'Randy's Roadies,' or to help support my team. It's an exciting opportunity; I'm going to use the Bike MS fundraiser to increase awareness of MS and to try to get more people to raise more funds to find a cure." For more information on Bike MS, please visit [http://main.nationalmssociety.org/site/TR/Bike/KSGBikeEvents?team\\_id=399025&pg=team&fr\\_id=22789](http://main.nationalmssociety.org/site/TR/Bike/KSGBikeEvents?team_id=399025&pg=team&fr_id=22789).

Cyclists can participate in 30-mile, 50-mile or 100-mile rides. As a participant living with MS, Randy will wear a jersey stating "I Ride with MS" and will be celebrated for not only being committed to creating a world free of MS, but also for inspiring others by his participation.

"I'll be riding on a flat portion of the route and I'll have an on-road support system. They'll pick me up when I'm done, whether it's 1 mile, 2 miles or maybe more, depending on how I'm feeling and on the weather that day."

Randy will have strong support from family and friends, including his wife, Janet, his main supporter who knows Mr. Swanson very well and lives with the disease every day. "I am humbled by her support, and the support of my three children, who are now 21, 19 and 17 and have always been there for me."

### Blessed and Thankful

Randy feels blessed to be able to work full-time as Consultant Services Engineer in the Planning & Project Development Division and to have

the support of management and co-workers at NDOR. He is appreciative of the many things that make this possible that are often taken for granted.

"There's so much that I couldn't do without my electric scooter. I've got a lot of equipment that helps me do my job and I'm hugely thankful for it. Also, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) rules in this country have made my life easier. I have handicapped parking spots, doors that will open with the push of a button and elevators. If anyone is going to be handicapped, I am the luckiest one of all, to have all of this and be able to do an indoor office job."

Randy is even more thankful about his situation when reflecting upon his dad, who also had MS. An electrician and plumber, his dad was always on the move, climbing ladders and going from place to place. While this constant activity probably postponed some of the side effects, he did have to retire early and he didn't have as many options available to him at that point.

The National MS Society estimates there are about 400,000 people in the U.S. with the disease. It is often difficult to diagnose since there is no single test for MS. Most people are diagnosed with MS between the ages of 20 and 50, and it is at least two to three times more common in women than in men. For more information about MS, go to <http://www.nationalmssociety.org/> and for information about Bike MS, go to [http://bikeksg.nationalmssociety.org/site/TR/Bike/KSGBikeEvents?fr\\_id=22789&pg=entry](http://bikeksg.nationalmssociety.org/site/TR/Bike/KSGBikeEvents?fr_id=22789&pg=entry)

While "Mr. Swanson" is Randy's constant uninvited companion, he is thankful for the support of his family and friends, employment opportunities at NDOR, the wonderful trails system, the grant money provided for his trike, and the opportunity to use his situation to participate in the Bike MS fundraiser.

"This fundraiser as an excellent opportunity to get the word out about the disease and raise funds to help find a cure. My ultimate goal here is to find a cure. I want "Mr. Swanson" to be gone forever." ♦



Photo by Jay Bailey

### 2014 Nebraska Girls State Visitors

Three high school juniors recently had the opportunity to learn about the duties of their counterparts at NDOR. Pictured, seated, l to r: Heather Folkers, Deputy Director from Randolph; Courtney Leach, Director from Lewellen; and Megan Homolka, Deputy Director from Swanton. Standing, l to r: Khalil Jaber, Deputy Director – Engineering; Randy Peters, Director – State Engineer; and Moe Jamshidi, Deputy Director – Operations.

## We Get Mail...

July 10, 2014

Dear Mr. Randy Peters,

Weather conditions across Nebraska these past few months have presented a number of challenges for our citizens and those working with response and recovery activities. The storms that devastated the communities of Beaver Crossing and Pilger highlight the severe weather outbreak experienced in our state. However, many rural areas and other communities were significantly impacted by this unusual weather pattern. Without the assistance of the first responder community, emergency management officials, volunteer organizations, and our local, state and federal partners, the recovery from the property damage and trauma associated with these incidents would have been overwhelming.

On behalf of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency staff, I wish to express our appreciation for the assistance and cooperation provided by the Department of Roads in response to these emergencies.

Please convey our gratitude to your employees for their efforts during this difficult time. Certainly, the dedication and persistence demonstrated by so many responders made a significant difference to those impacted by these events. Having partners we can count on ensures a rapid and coordinated effort that leads to a safe and effective response. I have every confidence that you and your staff will continue, as you did during this spring's disasters, to provide critical, professional and caring support whenever a disaster strikes.

Once again, please accept my most sincere appreciation on behalf of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and the State of Nebraska.

Sincerely,

Bryan J. Tuma  
Assistant Director  
Emergency Management Agency

*The Department of Roads receives numerous complimentary letters. The letters printed here are representative of those often sent praising the many fine and deserving employees of the Department of Roads.*



## What's the BuZZ?

### Coming Soon!

The Nebraska Department of Roads' website is getting a facelift! The Communication and Business Technology Support Divisions have combined their skills to plan, design and launch a new and improved website for the public and NDOR employees.

NDOR staff members involved in the project are Keil Wilson, project manager; Tara Grell, webmaster; Ryan Nguyen, senior web developer; and Abraham Chavez, business tech lead.

Team members have been familiarizing themselves with the old website to learn how the content is currently organized, who the key users are, and what those users want to do when they visit the NDOR website. Research has also been conducted on technology needs and restrictions.

They have decided to launch the employee portion of the website first so that NDOR staff can test the site and provide input on what is working well and what could be improved.

*Stay tuned for further updates!*



**Don't Magnify  
Your Risk  
of an Accident**

**Pay Attention  
in Work Zones!**



# All <sup>in</sup> the Family

**Information for "All in the Family" should be sent to the Communication Division. Appropriate information will be included in future Roadrunners.**

**Please note:** Birth announcements will be published as long as written permission is received by the Communication Division. This is necessary, as NDOR is required to adhere to privacy laws under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

## Births

Congratulations to Jason and Amanda Volz on the birth of their daughter, Lydia May, born May 25. Jason is an Engineer V in Construction.

## Condolences

Condolences to Ryan Omel on the passing of his grandmother. Ryan is an Appraiser II in Right-of-Way.

Condolences to Betty Schneider on the passing of her mother. Betty is an Office Clerk III in Right-of-Way.

Condolences to Steve Andersen on the loss of his mother. Steve is a Highway Bridge Inventory Data Manager in Bridge.

Condolences to Leroy and Linda Fangmeyer on the loss of their grandson. Leroy is a Hwy. Maintenance Worker Sr. at District 4 in Hebron.

Condolences to Rob Norton on the death of his mother. Rob is an Auto Diesel Mechanic at District 8 in Valentine.

Condolences to Mike Rudnick on the loss of his wife. Mike is a Project Manager at District 8 in Ainsworth.

## Weddings

Moe and Rhonda Jamshidi are happy to announce the wedding of their son, Devin, to Laine Israel. They were married on May 30 at a beautiful Nashville, TN country venue. Moe is Deputy Director-Operations. Rhonda is Hwy. Agreements Specialist II in Planning & Project Development.

Dan Owen and Kinsley Fisher were married on June 21 in Lincoln. Dan is the son of Mike and Carole Owen; Mike is Planning & Project Development Engineer.

Congratulations to Anthony (Tony) Hipke and Emma Forrester, both of Omaha, on their wedding August 23. Tony is the son of Earl and Jill Hipke. Jill is Staff Assistant at District 8 in O'Neill.

## This 'n That

Congratulations to Bob Foreman on his retirement after almost 54 years of service. Bob was the Engineering Unit Supervisor in Construction.

Congratulations to Ron Kontos on his retirement after 21 years of service. Ron was the Motor Carrier Permits Manager in Rail & Public Transportation.

Congratulations to Joe Kellner on his retirement after 43 years of service. Joe was an IT Supervisor in Business Technology Support.

Congratulations to Nicole Jaber on her graduation from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln on August 16. She earned a master's degree in Structural Engineering with minors in Business and Construction Management. Nicole is a Pavement Designer in Materials & Research. Her father, Fouad Jaber, is an Assistant State Bridge Engineer.

Congratulations to Denny Baehr on his retirement after 52 years of service. Denny was a Project Manager at District 2 in Omaha.

Izzy Vlach, age 13, participated in the 2014 Cornhusker State Games competitive swim meet in Lincoln. She earned five medals – three gold, one silver and one bronze. Izzy is the daughter of Michelle Vlach, Staff Assistant I at District 4 in Grand Island.

Ali Nicewonger, age 14, traveled to Europe through London, Great Britain; Caen France, Paris France; Bruges Belgium; Hague and Amsterdam Netherlands; Koblenz, Heidelberg; Freiberg Germany; Montafon Austria, and Zurich Switzerland for 20 days in July. Ali spent two days living with a family in Ulm, Germany where she attended the local school and helped teach English to younger students. She was nominated for the trip of European Heritage as a result of her academic excellence. Ali is the daughter of James and Julie Linder Nicewonger. Julie previously worked for the Department of Roads. Ali's grandfather is Delfs Linder, Project Coordinator with Local Projects in Materials & Research.

Traffic Engineering – Accident Records welcomes their new employees. Lori Block, Teresa Chad, Elizabeth Graham and Marguerite Sparks are Office Clerk IIIs and report to Carole Gasper. Constance Arnold is an Office Clerk II and reports to Carole Gasper. Clarice Fredenburg is an Office Clerk III and reports to Mary Gress. Christina Yates is a Statistical Clerk II and reports to Alan Brown.

A team will walk for Evan Krouse in the "Walk Now for Autism" fundraiser event on Sunday, October 5th at Haymarket Park. Evan is the son of Melissa Krouse, Right-of-Way Agent II.

(see **All in the Family** on next page)

## Service Awards

**Congratulations** to these dedicated individuals for their work and continued service with the Department of Roads. They celebrate their service dates in *August and September 2014*.

### 50 Years

Thomas Wing, Roadway Design

### 40 Years

William Cary, District 1  
Robert Frickel, Right-of-Way  
Allen Horak, District 4  
Steven Meyer, District 4  
Daniel Post, District 2  
Robert Sanburn, District 1  
Beverly Vonasek, Rail & Public Trans.

### 30 Years

Kelly Russell, District 8  
David Schoenmaker, Plan. & Proj. Dev.  
Jill Smith, Right-of-Way

### 20 Years

Chad Deseive, District 8  
William Divine, District 6  
Barbara Laughlin, District 1  
Robert Polen, District 4  
Todd Sager, District 5

### 10 Years

Leonard Cernik, District 1  
Aaron Cleaver, District 1  
Katie Duong, Plan. & Proj. Dev.  
Justin Gosnell, District 1  
John Lochner, Operations  
James Pfeifer, District 3  
Elwyn Werkmeister, District 7



**Toward  
Zero  
Deaths**

# NDOR Events Calendar

## — August —

**3 - 9 National Stop on Red Week**  
<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersection/redlight/outreach/>

**6 Blood Drive – Community Blood Bank**  
 NDOR Central Headquarters  
 Contact Diane Holthus @ 402-479-4580

**13 RoadToasters**  
 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
 Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628

**8/15 – 9/1 Impaired Driving Nat'l. Enforcement Crackdown**  
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/Impaired>

**22 Hwy. Commission Mtg./Dist. 4 Program Hearing**  
 8:30 a.m., Hastings City Council Chambers  
 220 N. Hastings Ave., Hastings, NE  
 Contact Sarah Kugler @ 402-479-4871

**22 Bd. Examiners for Co. Hwy. & City Street Supts.**  
 10:00 a.m., NDOR Materials & Research Conference Rm. 129  
 Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 402-479-4436

**27 RoadToasters**  
 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
 Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628

## — September —

**1 State Holiday – Labor Day**

**3-5 Bd. Examiners for Co. Hwy. & City Street Supts.**  
 Workshop: Sept. 3rd, 9:00 a.m. – Sept. 5th, 2:00 p.m.  
 Fairfield Inn, Kearney  
 Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 402-479-4436

**4 Letting**  
 1:30 p.m., NDOR Auditorium  
 Contact Kendall Stege @ 402-479-4528

**9 New Employee Orientation Program**  
 Rm. 152, 5001 S. 14th (the "Hill")

**10 RoadToasters**  
 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
 Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628

**11 Patriot Day**

**14 - 20 Child Passenger Safety Week**  
<http://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/cps>

**24 RoadToasters**  
 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
 Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628

**26 Hwy. Commission Meeting**  
 8:30 a.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
 Contact Sarah Kugler @ 402-479-4871

**26 Bd. Public Roads Class. & Stds.**  
 9:00 a.m., North Platte City Hall,  
 City Council Chamber, 211 W. Third Street  
 Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 402-479-4436

## — October —

**International Walk to School Month**  
[www.iwalktoschool.org/](http://www.iwalktoschool.org/)

**2 Blood Drive – Community Blood Bank**  
 NDOR Central Headquarters  
 Contact Diane Holthus @ 402-479-4580

**3 Bd. Examiners for Co. Hwy. & City Street Supts.**  
 Meeting: 8:45 a.m., Rm. 110, 5001 S. 14th (the "Hill")  
 Exam: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Rm., 151, 5001 S. 14th  
 Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 402-479-4436

**7 - 11 Drive Safely Work Week**  
[www.trafficsafety.org/drivesafelyworkweek/](http://www.trafficsafety.org/drivesafelyworkweek/)

**8 RoadToasters**  
 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
 Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628

**9 Letting**  
 1:30 p.m., NDOR Auditorium  
 Contact Kendall Stege @ 402-479-4528

**9 RoadToasters**  
 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
 Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628

**10 Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day**  
[www.brakesonfatalities.org](http://www.brakesonfatalities.org)

**13 State Holiday – Columbus Day**

**17 Bd. Public Roads Class. & Stds.**  
 9:00 a.m., Rm. 152, 5001 S. 14th (the "Hill")  
 Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 402-479-4436

**19 - 25 National Teen Driver Safety Week**  
[www.teendriversource.org](http://www.teendriversource.org)

**20 - 24 National School Bus Safety Week**

**22 RoadToasters**  
 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
 Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628

**24 Hwy. Commission Mtg./Dist. 1 Program Hearing**  
 8:30 a.m., meeting location tba - Lincoln, NE  
 Contact Sarah Kugler @ 402-479-4871

If you would like a key event included on upcoming calendars, call the Communication Office 479-4512 or e-mail [linda.wilson@nebraska.gov](mailto:linda.wilson@nebraska.gov). Information for the October/November Roadrunner should be received by September 30, 2014.

## All in the Family (cont'd. from page 11)

Nicolette "Nicki" Klein, Right-of-Way Associate II in the Highway Beautification Section at NDOR has been presented with the 2013-2014 Lincoln South Rotary "Rotarian of the Year" Award. This award is given in appreciation of Nicki's commitment and support to the goals and ideals of Lincoln South Rotary and Rotary International.

Congratulations to the 2014-2015 RoadToasters officers: President – Linda Wilson, Communication; Vice President, Education – Glenn

Williams, Materials & Research; Vice President, Membership – Deb Andrews; Vice President, Public Relations – Amy Chow, Materials & Research; Secretary – Jan Kollars, Right-of-Way; Treasurer – Tom Sawyer, Business Technology Support; and Sergeant-at-Arms – Denise Wallman, Operations. RoadToasters is a communication and public speaking training club sponsored by NDOR and affiliated with Toastmasters International. Meetings are the

second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m., in the Highway Commission Room at Central Headquarters.

Congratulations to Linda Wilson, who earned her Triple Crown Award in Toastmasters – three educational awards in one year – Distinguished Toastmaster, Competent Leader and Advanced Communicator Gold. This is her second year in a row to earn the Triple Crown Award. Linda is a Public Information Officer II in Communication.